

CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDMENTS

~~Cancel claims 12, 13, 15 and 20.~~

Amend claims 11 and 16 and add new claim 21 as follows:

11. (twice amended) A reactor for the catalytic oxidation of ammonia ~~to~~ nitrogen oxides, which contains a noble metal gauze catalyst and a heat exchanger in that order in the direction of flow and has a catalyst for the decomposition of N_2O which is prepared by combining $CuAl_2O_4$ with tin, lead and/or an element of main group II or transition group II of the Periodic Table of the Elements as oxide or salt or in elemental form and subsequently calcining the mixture thus obtained at from 300 to 1300°C and a pressure in the range from 0.1 to 200 bar located between the noble metal gauze catalyst and the heat exchanger ,and which is installed as a fixed bed having a height of from 5 to 10 cm.

16. (twice amended) A process for the catalytic decomposition of N_2O in a gas mixture obtained in the preparation of nitric acid by catalytic oxidation of ammonia ~~in~~ a reactor having a noble metal gauze catalyst and a heat exchanger in that order in the flow direction, where N_2O is decomposed catalytically over a catalyst for the decomposition N_2O located between the noble metal catalyst and the heat exchanger so that the hot gas mixture obtained from the catalytic oxidation of ammonia is brought into contact with the catalyst for the decomposition of N_2O prior to subsequent cooling, wherein the catalyst for the decomposition of N_2O is prepared by combining $CuAl_2O_4$ with tin, lead and/or an element of main group II or

transition group II of the Periodic Table of the Elements as oxide or salt or in elemental form and subsequently calcining the mixture thus obtained at from 300 to 1300°C and a pressure in the range from 0.1 to 200 bar, and wherein the catalyst is installed as a fixed bed having a height of from 5 to 10 cm.

21.(new) A process as claimed in claim 16, wherein the catalyst is employed in the form of star extrudates.